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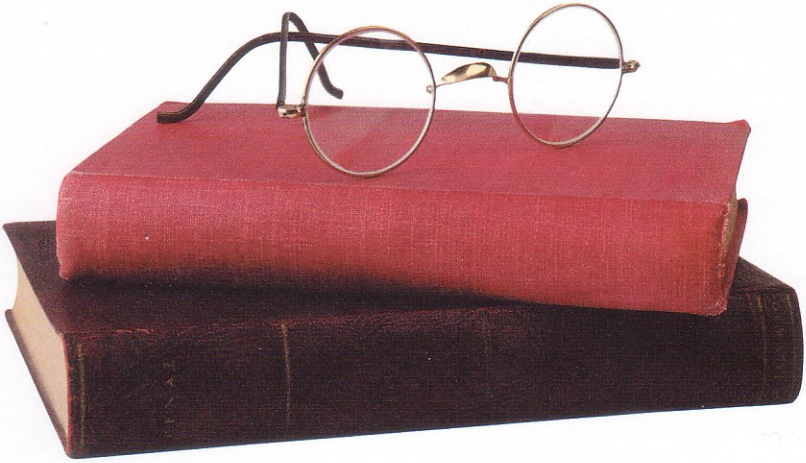
The History of Ancient Egypt

Professor Bob Brier

Long Island University

Part I



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The History of Ancient Egypt, Part I

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Robert Brier, Ph.D.

Long Island University

Bob Brier was born in the Bronx, where he still lives. He received his bachelor's degree from Hunter College and Ph.D. in philosophy from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1970.

From 1981–1996 he was Chairman of the Philosophy Department at C.W. Post campus of Long Island University and now primarily teaches Egyptology courses. He was Director of the National Endowment for the Humanities' Egyptology Today Program and has twice been selected as a Fulbright Scholar. He is also the recipient of the David Newton Award for Teaching Excellence.

In 1994, Dr. Brier became the first person in 2,000 years to mummify a human cadaver in the ancient Egyptian style. This research was the subject of a National Geographic television special, *Mr. Mummy*. Dr. Brier is also the host of The Learning Channel's series *The Great Egyptians*.

Professor Brier is the author of *Ancient Egyptian Magic* (Morrow: 1980), *Egyptian Mummies* (Morrow: 1994), *Encyclopedia of Mummies* (Facts on File: 1998), *The Murder of Tutankhamen: A True Story* (Putnam's: 1998), *Daily Life in Ancient Egypt* (Greenwood: 1999), and numerous scholarly articles.

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The History of Ancient Egypt

Scope:

There is something about ancient Egypt that fascinates almost everyone. Egyptian exhibits at museums draw the largest crowds, mummy movies pull in the largest audiences, and Egypt attracts the most tourists. Part of the attraction is undoubtedly the exotic nature of the beast. Treasures hidden in tombs seem always just around the corner; hieroglyphs, while beautiful, seem impossible to read; and the beautiful sculptures and paintings seem from a time incredibly long ago. In a sense, one goal of this course is to demystify ancient Egypt but not to take the fun out of it.

As we learn more and more about Egypt, it will all become familiar. Students will have an idea of how hieroglyphs work and what they say; we will come to know how archaeologists, using scholarship and learning, search for undiscovered tombs; and we will learn the techniques used to create the art of ancient Egypt. But as we learn more and more, the student should become more and more amazed by the culture. What was created on the banks of the Nile was an event unique in human history. No civilization lasted so long, contributed so much, or repeatedly amazed as did ancient Egypt.

Because Egyptian history lasted so long, Egyptologists divide it into three periods called *Kingdoms*: (1) The Old Kingdom saw the beginnings of nationhood for Egypt under one supreme ruler, the pharaoh. During this period, the pyramids were built, and the rules of Egyptian art were established that would govern for 3,000 years. (2) The Middle Kingdom, a period of stabilizing after the Old Kingdom collapsed, saw a nation fighting to regain its greatness. (3) The New Kingdom, the glamour period of ancient Egypt, was when all the stars—Hatshepsut, Tutankhamen, Ramses the Great, and others—appeared.

We will chronologically survey the full 3,000 years of recorded ancient Egyptian history, emphasizing that the ancient Egyptians were people just like ourselves, motivated by the same fears, doubts, and hopes. By the end of the course, students should feel that they know the kings and queens who made Egypt great. As we study the different reigns, we will also discuss various aspects of Egyptian civilization so that you should learn far more than just the rulers of ancient Egypt. You should be able to walk through the Egyptian collection of a museum and tell when a statue was carved, have an idea which pharaoh it is by the way the face is carved, and perhaps even be able to read the hieroglyphs to discern the king's name. In short, I want to turn out "junior Egyptologists," people with a deep understanding of Egypt, for whom ancient artifacts will not all look the same.

To a great extent, the fun of history is in the details. Knowing what kind of wine Tutankhamen preferred makes him come alive. Knowing that Ramses the Great was crippled by arthritis for the last decade of his long life makes us more sympathetic to the boastful monarch who fathered more than one hundred

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children. If we understand what it was like to be a miner sent to the turquoise mines in the Sinai in the summer, we will feel a kinship with our long dead counterparts. As we wind our way chronologically through thirty centuries of history, we will pause repeatedly to look at the details that make up the big picture.

The first five lectures will really be a prolegomena. We will see what Egypt was like before writing, and we will learn how Egyptologists piece together the history of ancient Egypt. We will see how we know what we know—how hieroglyphs were deciphered, for example—and we will see that since then, Egyptology has been one ongoing detective story.

In Lectures Six through Ten, we will see the Egyptians rise to a greatness far surpassing any other people in the Near East. We learn of a king who united Egypt by might and of a pharaoh who showed Egypt how to build the pyramids. While we see how the pyramids were built, we will learn just what it was that made Egypt great. At the end of these lectures, we will see Egypt collapse into a dark age about which little is known, and we will try to figure out what happened.

Lectures Eleven through Sixteen discuss Egypt's successful attempt to pull itself together, only to collapse once again. We see heroic kings from the south battle to unite the country and establish a peace that would last for two centuries—as long as the United States has existed. Then we will see Egypt invaded by the mysterious people called the Hyksos, only to watch as the kings of the south battle Egypt back to greatness. We will also look in detail at the Old Testament story of Joseph in Egypt to see what light it might shed on this period.

Lectures Seventeen through Twenty-Five deal with the fabulous Dynasty XVIII, the period of Egypt's greatest wealth and personalities. We will take in-depth looks at the kings and queens of this period. We will see Hatshepsut, the woman who ruled as king; Akhenaten, the first monotheist in history, who changed the religion of Egypt; and Tutankhamen, the son of Akhenaten, who became the most famous of Egypt's kings when his undisturbed tomb was discovered in 1922.

Lectures Twenty-Five through Twenty-Eight are a brief excursion into my specialty, mummies. We will talk about everything you ever wanted to know about mummies, including how to make one. We will also see that mummies are like books—packed with information—if you know how to read them.

Lectures Twenty-Nine through Thirty-Five focus on the end of the New Kingdom, the last great epoch of Egyptian history. Dominated by Ramses the Great, this period also had other important kings, and we will discuss who was the unnamed pharaoh of the Exodus.

In Lectures Thirty-Six through Forty-One, we will see Egypt's greatness slipping away. Egypt will be invaded by a series of conquering peoples, including

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Nubians, Libyans, and Persians. It is a sad story, and we will examine the causes of Egypt's decline.

Egypt's last gasp is under the Greek kings, the Ptolemies. This period begins with the conquest of Alexander the Great and ends with Cleopatra. For two hundred years, once mighty Egypt is ruled by kings named Ptolemy, all descended from General Ptolemy who served under Alexander. In Lectures Forty-Two through Forty-Seven, we will trace what life was like for an Egyptian under the oppressive rule of their Greek masters.

It is a long and fascinating history, but the study of Egypt should not end with this course. There will be suggestions of how to continue learning about Egypt—societies to join, events to attend, books to read. The adventure should not end here.

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Lecture One
Introduction

Scope: In this lecture, we will discuss five basic points: (1) why we should study ancient Egypt, (2) what the approaches of the course will be, (3) how we know what we know about Egypt, (4) how the course will be organized, and (5) the goals of the course—what I hope to achieve and what the student can expect from the forty-eight lectures.

Outline

I. Why should we study ancient Egypt? There is something very special about Egypt—it is an attractive escape from our everyday world.

A. Egypt is the most advanced ancient civilization in history. Its accomplishments include monumental architecture (the pyramids), medical science, monotheism, and mummification.

B. Even if the hieroglyphs are decipherable, Egypt remains one of the most mysterious civilizations in history.

C. Finally, Egyptian art is among the most beautiful of all time.

II. There are various approaches to Egyptology.

A. The philological approach—for example, that of Sir Alan Gardiner—studies the language.

B. The historical approach looks at Egypt through events and documents, often in relation to Egypt's neighbors. This is my approach.

C. The art historical approach looks at ancient Egypt through its art. Egyptian art maintains great continuity for 3,000 years, subscribing to eternal values rather than creativity and innovation.

III. Art and literature reveal much about this civilization.

A. Tomb paintings tell us about the Egyptians' belief in the afterlife.

B. Tombs were provisioned with an amazing variety of everyday objects.

C. Temple walls give us histories, such as records of battles and lists of kings.

D. We have religious texts on papyrus, wood, and stone. The Book of the Dead reveals what Egyptians thought about the next world.

E. Literature, especially fiction and love poetry, gives us additional insight into the beliefs of the Egyptians.

F. Herodotus, the Greek historian from the fifth century BC, provides further observations of Egypt, even if they aren't always reliable.

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IV. This course is based on the following method.

A. We will emphasize people and their achievements in an effort to make the dead come alive.

B. The course will be chronological, ending with Cleopatra, and will include a few detours along the way. One such detour will be my specialty, paleopathology.

C. Dates will be minimally important—you're not going to remember them anyway. The relative chronology of events is what matters.

V. The course has several goals.

A. The first goal is to gain an understanding of Egyptian history, architecture, religion, and mythology.

B. The second goal is to increase your appreciation of the art of ancient Egypt.

C. The final goal is to motivate you to continue learning after the course is over.

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Lecture Two
Prehistoric Egypt

Scope: In this lesson, we will see just how old "old" is. The basic divisions of prehistory (Paleolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic) will be discussed, and each category will be defined and its specific characteristics delineated. Here we will learn the details of how stone tools are fashioned. Once these categories are clear, we will discuss the difficulties in studying a prehistoric civilization and how its remains are dated. We discuss relative and absolute dating and the various techniques used to achieve them.

Outline

I. How old is "old"? In the seventeenth century, the Bishop of Usher's Biblical estimate set the beginning of the world at 4004 BC. The argument against fossils and evolution—the battle against prehistoric study—was eventually challenged by both data and theory.

A. In 1859, excavations in England revealed Stone-Age tools and bones of extinct animals.

B. In the same year, Charles Darwin published *The Origin of the Species*, a book that suggested a far more distant point of origin for mankind than the Bishop of Usher had posited.

C. A century later, archaeologist Louis Leaky's Olduvai Gorge excavation discovered a hominid (manlike) fossil that was 1.75 million years old—and some have proposed that hominids are even older.

II. The distant human past is conventionally divided into three ages: the Paleolithic, or Old Stone Age, when humans existed as hunter-gatherers; the Mesolithic, a transition stage; and the Neolithic, or New Stone Age, when plants and animals were first domesticated. We begin with several stages of the Paleolithic.

A. The Early Paleolithic Age dates from 700,000–70,000 BC, when Homo Erectus lived.

1. The earliest Egyptian habitation was circa 700,000 BC. These people perhaps migrated from the south along the Nile Valley. The climate supported fauna as found today on the Serengeti Plain—giraffes, gazelles, hippopotami.

2. The first human inhabitants used language, gathered food, used the hand axe, and perhaps controlled fire. The axe was flaked, fit nicely in the hand, and was the only tool for 70,000 years.

B. The Early Middle Paleolithic, 70,000–43,000 BC, was the time of Neanderthal man.

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1. Neanderthals were not "brute savages." They buried their dead in caves and cared for the injured and old.
2. They developed a flaking technique that provided smaller, better-formed tools, such as scrapers and daggers. Many have been found in the desert—Egypt was more moist at the time.

C. Homo Sapiens appeared during the Late Middle Paleolithic Age, from 43,000–30,000 BC.
1. Modern man, Homo Sapiens, replaced rather than evolved from the Neanderthal.
2. One of two sources of the Nile is Lake Tana in Ethiopia. During this period, it joins the Nile for the first time, causing flooding or inundation.
3. The average life expectancy during this time was less than 30 years.

D. The Late Paleolithic Age lasted from 30,000–10,000 BC.
1. The Nile was declining. The people lived by swamps (malaria was a problem), fished, and ate mollusks.
2. Their settlements had clay hearths on which they cooked, grindstones for grinding wild cereal grains, and pigments for eye make-up. There was no farming or cattle breeding.
3. Tools were now fashioned from quartz and diorite, as well as from flint and obsidian. The development of the sickle was an indication that plants were becoming important for food. An intensive caring for plants may indicate an early experiment in farming, but this was not yet domestication.
4. The development of the bow, the first weapon to store energy, along with the arrow, made hunting safer and easier.
5. Tools have been found in the south at Kom Ombo. They are called *microtools*—arrow points, sickle blades, and grindstones.
6. Sickles disappear for a couple of thousand years. This may indicate that early attempts at farming failed, perhaps because the climate changed or hunting became more efficient.

III. The Mesolithic Period dates from 10,000–5,000 BC.

A. During the Mesolithic, cosmetics for ritual use appeared.

B. There was no pottery in the north of Egypt; ostrich eggshells were used for cooking. In the south (Sudan), pottery was developed.

C. The human groups were very isolated, and each may have spoken its own dialect.

IV. The Neolithic Age dates from 5,000–3,200 BC.

A. Pottery was developed in the north.

B. Agriculture was introduced—grains were cooked, beer was brewed.

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C. Settlements grew up along the Nile, and the first signs of kingship appeared in both the north (Lower Egypt) and the south (Upper Egypt).

D. This was the beginning of Egyptian civilization. The population was about 2,000 people. The dead were buried, with possessions, in sand-pit burials.

E. Carved palettes, some adorned with decorative art, were used for grinding cosmetics. This was a culture capable of more than just surviving.

V. Different kinds of dating establish the antiquity of ancient Egypt.

A. Relative dating is not absolute and, thus, is subject to variation.

1. Pottery is essential to dating sites. Sir Flinders Petrie's insight was that the more highly decorated pottery is newer—things evolve from the simple to the complex.

2. Stratigraphy records layers during excavations—the higher excavations are newer.

B. Absolute dating is based on scientific examination.

1. Carbon-14 dating is Dr. Willard Libby's discovery. All living things have the same proportion of C-14, with a half-life of 5,730 years. At death, organic material starts to decay into C-12 and nitrogen-14.

2. Problems with this method include contamination, such as the reuse of old wood in new houses. Carbon-14 dating can be used neither for very old samples (too little C-14 remains), nor for nonliving things, such as stones and metals.

C. Paleobotany and paleozoology are, respectively, the studies of plant and animal remains. Properly studied, pollen and bones can reveal the flora and fauna of a distant period.

Essential Reading:

Michael Hoffman, *Egypt Before the Pharaohs*.

Questions to Consider:

1. What was the rate of progress like in prehistoric Egypt?
2. How do we figure out what life was like in a preliterate society?

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Lecture Three

Ancient Egyptian Thought

Scope: In this lecture, we will try to understand how the ancient Egyptians thought. We will use three concepts to delineate different kinds of thinking: mythology, religion, and philosophy. By the end of this lecture, the student should understand the differences among these concepts and see how they played a role in the life of the ancient Egyptians.

Outline

I. Mythology, religion, and philosophy try to answer nonempirical questions—the "big" ones that science can't answer.

A. Is there life after death?

B. How did the universe begin (before the Big Bang)?

C. Is there a God?

II. Mythology contains stories that are not to be taken literally but answer basic questions about the nature of the universe. Myths have a message, then, but can't be taken literally. Unlike religion, mythology takes place in primordial time, outside of chronology or calendar time.

A. The basic Egyptian myth described the primordial eight gods—the Ogdoad—in the primordial waters. These gods came in pairs.

1. Hok and Hoket represent formlessness.
2. Kuk and Kuket are darkness.
3. Amun and Amunet are hiddenness.
4. Nun and Nunet are the primordial waters.
5. Together, the eight gods represent Chaos and are often depicted with the heads of frogs.
6. The primordial hill rises out of these waters.
7. Atum, a god, stood on that hill. He created himself, then generated the other gods.

B. The Ennead added an additional nine elemental Egyptian gods. This is quite different from Genesis and the four basic elements of the Greeks.

1. Atum's children were Shu (air) and Tefnut (moisture).
2. Shu and Tefnut begat Geb (earth) and Nut (sky).
3. Geb and Nut give birth to two pairs, each of them sister and brother and wife and husband: Isis and Osiris and Seth and Nephthys. Although Seth is evil, the three others are elementally good.

C. Isis and Osiris were central to the Egyptian belief in life after death.

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1. Isis and Osiris descend to earth to civilize Egypt. While Osiris goes to teach the rest of the world how to be civilized, Isis keeps her evil brother Seth in check.
2. Seth tricks Osiris into climbing into what will become his coffin, nails the coffin shut, then throws it in the Nile. After Osiris dies, Isis journeys to Byblos to recover her husband's body and returns to Egypt to bury it properly.
3. Seth finds the body of Osiris and hacks it into thirteen pieces, scattering them over the Nile. Isis and Nephthys find all the pieces except the phallus and reassemble Osiris. Isis breathes life into her husband, and he is resurrected—the first person to resurrect, the first "mummy."
4. Osiris becomes the God of the Dead; his story is the original lesson in the importance of staying at home and remaining whole. Henceforth, it will be important to be buried on Egyptian soil and to be buried complete, both prerequisites for resurrection.
5. Isis gives birth to Horus, who defeats his Uncle Seth in battle. Horus loses his eye in the struggle, which is magically regenerated.
6. Seth, however, doesn't die: evil will always be with us.

III. In religion, by contrast, the concept of belief is essential. Religion includes stories believed to be historical, such as the account of Moses in the Bible, that take place in chronological time.

IV. Philosophy deals with the same questions as religion does.

A. Unlike religion, however, philosophy requires a proof based on logic.

B. The answers to the great philosophical questions are not matters of opinion but facts that are unknown. It's not that the great questions are relative, but that we don't, given our limited perspective, have answers to them.

C. Did the universe have no beginning, or did it begin from nothing?

1. Such philosophical questions are important, but whether the Egyptians "did" philosophy per se is not revealed to us in their documents.
2. Could such an advanced civilization have been ignorant of philosophy? Perhaps they simply refused to commit it to papyrus.

Essential Reading:

Erik Hornung, *Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt*.

Supplementary Reading:

Sigfried Morenz, *Egyptian Religion*.

Questions to Consider:

1. How do religion, mythology, and philosophy differ?

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2. Did the Egyptians "do" philosophy?

Lecture Four
Napoleon and the Beginnings of Egyptology

Scope: We will learn how Napoleon's Egyptian campaign of 1798–1801 began modern Egyptology. We will discuss the reasons Napoleon went to Egypt and the main events of the campaign but will focus on the corps of 150 scientists that he brought with the army. We will see how Egypt had been studied before Napoleon's expedition and contrast this with the scientific observations and reports that his savants produced. We discuss in detail the monumental publication *Description de l'Egypte* and how it set the standard for all future Egyptological publications. We conclude with the discovery of the Rosetta stone.

Outline

I. Napoleon Bonaparte had several reasons to go to Egypt.

- **A.** Napoleon didn't want to invade England, as the French government wanted, so he invaded Egypt instead.
- **B.** He hoped to cut off England's land route to India.
- **C.** He was following in the footsteps of Alexander the Great, a personal hero.
- **D.** Napoleon was also a scholar—a member of the French Institute in mathematics.

II. What was known about Egypt?

- **A.** Hieroglyphs were a dead language, so Egyptian history was unknown.
- **B.** There was no systematic study or collection of objects, merely cabinets of curiosities and missionaries' reports.
- **C.** Richard Pococke and Frederik Norden, sea captains, were early visitors to Egypt but untrained as observers.

III. Bonaparte assembled an all-star team of 150 scientists and artists for his campaign. His destination was a secret.

- **A.** Dominique-Vivant Denon (1747–1825) was an artist who became first director of the Louvre.
- **B.** Claude Louis Berthollet (1748–1822) was Napoleon's chemist.
- **C.** Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire (1772–1844) was a brilliant young zoologist who went on to accomplish much.
- **D.** Nicolas Conte had the ability to manufacture anything: "All the arts in his hands and all the sciences in his head."
- **E.** Redoute, Dolomieu, Fourier, Monge, and others were exceptional men who rounded out an extraordinary team.

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F. Students and engineers, printers and printing presses all came along for the adventure.

IV. In spite of all the intellectual baggage, there was a war to fight.

A. The Mamelukes, once bought as slaves, had become a warrior caste that tyrannized Egypt. Bonaparte promised to liberate the Egyptians, going so far as to issue proclamations that were the first printed documents in Arabic.

B. At the Battle of the Pyramids, East met the modern West for the first time. The Mameluke cavalry charged the French army, massed together in squares. The French won the battle decisively.

C. The Battle of the Nile was Napoleon's first setback.

1. British admiral Horatio Nelson's impatience led to victory for the English.
2. The French were anchored near the shore, their guns aimed seaward. Nelson daringly cut between ships and shore and attacked the French from the rear.
3. The French ship *L'Orient*, the largest in the world, suddenly exploded, a sound heard twenty miles away.
4. Felicia Hemans's famous first line, "The boy stood on the burning deck" (Admiral Casabianca's son), is about the Battle of the Nile.
5. Many scientific instruments were lost when the ships went down, a blow to the expedition.
6. Even worse, the French were cut off from supplies coming from the European mainland.

D. Plague began to take its toll on the French during the siege of Acre, a fort on the Mediterranean.

E. Napoleon suddenly deserted his troops and returned to France, declaring himself the "conqueror" of Egypt.

V. The campaign gave birth to modern Egyptology.

A. Scientists published the *Description de l'Egypte*, ten volumes full of drawings and illustrations. The Egyptian fad in furnishings and fashion was soon all the rage in Europe.

B. Napoleon instructed his men to copy the hieroglyphs *exactly*. This would turn out to be one of the most lasting accomplishments of the campaign.

C. Collections of antiquities and natural history were systematically framed.

VI. The Rosetta stone was the key to deciphering the hieroglyphs.

A. England, the victor, agreed by treaty that the French could retain all the discoveries of the campaign—except the antiquities.

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B. The most important of these was the Rosetta stone. Scholars immediately knew it was crucial—the inscription appeared in both Greek and Egyptian. Although the French tried to retain it, today the Rosetta stone is in the British Museum instead of the Louvre because of this treaty.

Essential Reading:

J. Christopher Herold, *Bonaparte in Egypt*.

Supplementary Reading:

Bob Brier, *The Glory of Ancient Egypt*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Why did Bonaparte go to Egypt?
2. What were the contributions to Egyptology that came out of the Egyptian campaign?

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Lecture Five

The Rosetta Stone, and Much More

Scope: This lecture has three distinct goals: (1) The student will learn why the Rosetta stone was the key to deciphering the ancient Egyptian language. (2) The student will learn the four different scripts in which ancient Egyptian was written (hieroglyphic, hieratic, demotic, and Coptic). (3) The student will see the three different ways that hieroglyphic signs could be used.

Outline

I. Ancient Egyptian was a dead language.

A. Because Egypt had long been occupied by foreigners, including the Greeks and Romans, the ancient written language had expired. It remained dead for over 1,000 years.

B. The central assumption was that the ancient language was ideographic, not alphabetic. But this was wrong. The ancient Greek writer Horapollo correctly asserted that the mysterious symbols represented something other than what they depicted, although he was wrong in other matters.

II. The Rosetta stone was the key to decipherment.

A. The stone was found in the foundations of a fort at Rosetta and is stela-shaped, like a tombstone. Stelae were carved stones with inscriptions that were placed like bulletin boards in front of temples.

B. The stone contained three scripts (hieroglyphic, demotic, and Greek) but only two languages (Greek and Egyptian).

1. The hieroglyphic script was used for sacred texts.

2. More efficient than hieroglyphs, demotic was a script the people wrote.

3. Greek, the third script, was the language of the rulers of Egypt during the period that the stone was composed. The significance of its appearance on the stone was realized immediately through the last line: "Written in sacred and native and Greek characters."

4. Hieratic was not on the Rosetta stone but was a cursive, shorthand form of hieroglyphs.

5. Coptic, an ancient form of Egyptian spelled out in the Greek alphabet, was not on the Rosetta stone either but was instrumental in deciphering it.

C. The Rosetta stone was taken by the British in 1801. Contrary to popular belief, it is reddish granite, not black basalt.

D. The stone's decipherment was the product of several minds.

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1. Thomas Young, an English physician, correctly concluded that the sign for "Ptolemy," for example, was phonetic—that an alphabet, not an ideogram, was at work.
2. Jean Francois Champollion, a Frenchman who knew Coptic, translated the message in 1822 through his knowledge of ancient Egyptian sounds. Coptic, then, proved to be our connection with spoken ancient Egyptian.

III. The ancient Egyptian language works on several levels.

A. There are several kinds of hieroglyphs.

1. Hieroglyphs can be phonetic, like our alphabet. In ancient Egyptian, a rectangle represents a *p*; a hand represents a *d*. As in many ancient languages, there were no vowels.
2. Determinatives clarify the meaning of such phonetic words. They are placed at the end of a word as an ideographic reminder.
3. Ideograms, or pictorial writing, represent concepts. These images were a shorthand version of hieroglyphs.

B. Hieroglyphs could be written left to right, right to left, or top to bottom. For purposes of symmetry, which the Egyptians admired, the language was thus very flexible.

C. You can easily write your own name in hieroglyphs through transliteration.

Essential Reading:

Stephen Quirke and Carol Andrews, *The Rosetta Stone*.

Supplementary Reading:

Mark Collier and Bill Manley, *How to Read Hieroglyphs*.

Questions to Consider:

1. What three scripts are on the Rosetta stone?
2. Why did ancient Egyptian become a dead language?

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Lecture Six

The First Nation in History

Scope: Here we see Egypt become the first nation in history. We will also consider the first historical document in the world. From the time of the unification of Upper and Lower Egypt by King Narmer (Menes), it would take only a few hundred years to build a power that would dominate the Near East for thousands of years. We will show why the political structure of ancient Egypt made this possible and how the Narmer Palette tells this story.

Outline

I. Egypt was originally divided into separate kingdoms: Upper and Lower Egypt. By 3200 BC, they appear to have been ruled by different kings.

- **A.** The crown was a symbol of royal power. In the south (Upper Egypt), it was white and conical in shape; in the north (Lower Egypt), it was red with a peak at the back.
  - **1.** No crown has ever been found for the two kingdoms.
  - **2.** The crowns were believed to have magical powers. It was the one thing that a pharaoh couldn't take with him to the next world.
- **B.** Communication between the two kingdoms was probably limited, making unification more of a labor. Travel, whether by donkey or boat, was difficult.

II. Egypt was united from the separate kingdoms into one nation about 3150 BC, when King Narmer from the south conquered the north.

- **A.** The Narmer Palette, the world's first historical document (3150 BC), was discovered north of Aswan in 1897. A ceremonial palette made of slate, it was not intended for cosmetic use in daily life. It may have been used to grind cosmetics for offerings at a shrine to the gods.
  - **1.** The Narmer Palette shows the beginning of writing, the first real hieroglyphs.
  - **2.** Artistic conventions appear: The king was portrayed as the symbol of Egypt, and hierarchical proportions were used to distinguish kings from commoners.
  - **3.** The palette contains a complete story. Narmer, wearing the white crown and holding a mace in one hand, is about to smite his enemy, whom he is holding by the hair with the other hand. That enemy may have been the king of the north.
  - **4.** The enemy has a ring through his nose that is tied by a string to the falcon, symbol of the pharaoh.
  - **5.** "Registration" is recognizable on the palette—figures stand on defined planes or registers, rather than float haphazardly.

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6. On the other side of the palette, we have the conclusion of the story. In the victory procession, we see the red crown on Narmer—representing the unification of Egypt—and the headless enemies vanquished by the new king.
7. Beneath Narmer are two fantastic beasts. Perhaps the intertwined necks of the beasts—panthers or leopards—are a symbol of the unification of Egypt.
8. Beneath them is a fortress being broken down by a bull, another symbol of Narmer.

B. The palette was probably carved by two different people, one doing each side. After all, the figures on each side are done in different styles. We may, in fact, have been reading the two sides in the wrong order, a mystery for future Egyptologists to ponder.

C. Why is the palette so important? For the story it tells. Now Egypt has a single king, a god on earth, Horus on earth. Other ancient nations had kings but not kings that were gods.

III. There are important benefits of a unified Egypt, as Narmer became the first king of the First Dynasty.

A. The all-powerful ruler, from Egypt to Plato's *Republic* to Thomas Hobbes's *Leviathan*, can do great things. (We give up our rights to a strong central government so that we will be safe.) Egypt, beginning with Narmer, could now rule the entire Mideast.

B. A standing army was possible, because centralization focuses resources where they are needed most.

C. The annual flooding of the Nile could now be turned to public advantage. Irrigation projects could be organized with large numbers of people working for the common good. Workers coaxed the Nile from its banks by irrigation ditches.

D. Egypt was the first nation in history with a powerful centralized government. The government would collapse at times, but the people would always go back to the "divine order" of a centralized government ruled by a pharaoh.

E. Such monuments as the pyramids were possible only because of a centralized government that facilitated the tradition of massive public works projects. The Egyptians used people, not beasts of burden, for large architectural undertakings.

F. It would take just a few hundred years after Narmer's conquest to begin the building of the great pyramids.

Essential Reading:

Michael Rice, *Egypt's Making*, Chapter 3.

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Supplementary Reading:

Peter Clayton, *Chronicle of the Pharaohs*, pp. 14–19.

Questions to Consider:

1. What is the story told by the Narmer Palette?
2. What are the advantages of nationhood?

Lecture Seven
The Rise of the Old Kingdom

Scope: We will see the development of Egypt into a great nation led by a single all-powerful ruler, the king. Here traditions are set that will last for thousands of years: a capital city, separate burial places for the kings, solar boats to make the journey to the next world. It is also the time when the pattern for pharaohs' behavior is established for future dynasties. We will also see how the transition was made from simple burials to the first pyramid in history.

Outline

I. A capital will be established at Memphis in the north, and it all began with Narmer. Dynasty I (3035–2890 BC) included the earliest kings.

A. Excavations at Abydos, in the south, revealed the tombs of the early kings.

B. Hor-Aha founded Memphis, in the north, as a capital city. (*Egypt* actually derives from the local name for Memphis.) The location was crucial for strategic reasons: to guard against invasion from the sea, because invasion across the desert was too difficult.

C. The kings of Dynasty I were buried at Abydos, the sacred city where Osiris was buried in the famous myth.

1. These are simple underground mud-brick tombs of King Djer, Den, and others, which have been robbed.

2. Archeologist Flinders Petrie excavated these tombs in the late nineteenth century. To avoid looting, he paid his workers market value for their discoveries. (Other excavators tried to confiscate everything.) At one point, they found a detached mummy's arm in King Djer's tomb, wearing the oldest royal jewelry ever discovered. Petrie weighed it and paid for it in gold sovereigns. A curator in Cairo later threw away the arm and kept only the jewelry!

3. Burials for kings were also at Saqqara, named for Sokar, god of the dead. Why two burials? One burial site was a false one, or cenotaph. Thus, the two represented a symbolic way of denoting power over the north and south. We're not sure, for certain pharaohs, which burial was the real one.

II. Dynasty II (2890–2686 BC) was a period as long as the history of the United States, but little is known of it. It was the succeeding dynasty, however, that established Egypt as a civilization of renown.

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III. Dynasty III (2686–2613 BC) was a time of greatness.

A. Zoser (2686–2649 BC) was the first pyramid builder. He elaborated on the older burial practices of Egypt.

1. Sand-pit burials, originally used for the dead, were impermanent by nature, uncovered by wind and jackals in search of decomposing flesh. The Egyptians began removing sand to ground level and cutting into the rock to carve a tomb.
2. They would erect a *mastaba*, or rectangular shelter, above the tomb. Imhotep, Zoser's architect, decided to stack mastaba on mastaba, creating a step effect; from the mastaba, the pyramid developed.
3. The Step Pyramid of Saqqara, grand in size and conception, was the first stone building in history, probably three or four times larger than any other building on the planet.
4. Next to the pyramid is a little room where Zoser included a small statue of himself. In case his body was destroyed, his soul could live there until he was resurrected.
5. He also built chapels at the pyramid. The pyramid imitates reed construction techniques, only using stone.
6. Here Zoser planned a complex intended for use as a courtyard for the *heb-sed* and other rituals. The heb-sed festival celebrated the rejuvenation of the aging pharaoh every thirty years.
7. The tomb of Imhotep, the architect, is still missing. Zoser permitted him to be buried near his own tomb. Professor Walter B. Emery, close on the scent of finding it, died before it was discovered.
8. Zoser also had a southern burial, just a couple of hundred yards away from the Step Pyramid. Tiles on the inside, made of the ceramic called *faience*, show him running a heb-sed festival.

B. Horus Sekhemkhet, Zoser's successor, ruled from 2649–2643 BC.

1. Sekhemkhet was going to build a Step Pyramid like Zoser's, but it was only a few meters high when he died. Its stone walls are still rough, so we know the blocks were not finished by workers until they were on site. The intact pyramid was discovered in 1951.
2. The burial chamber was still sealed. Though a great discovery was expected, Sekhemkhet's stone sarcophagus turned out to be empty. Gold jewelry was found on the floor of the tomb but no body.
3. Perhaps Sekhemkhet was buried in a second tomb, and the empty one was only a decoy for grave robbers. Unfortunately, the tomb robbers were usually the ones who built the tombs! We still haven't found the real tomb of Sekhemkhet.

C. Egypt's rise to greatness will continue.

Essential Reading:

Aidan Dodson, *Monarchs of the Nile*, Chapters IV and V.

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Supplementary Reading:

Peter Clayton, *Chronicle of the Pharaohs*, pp. 32–60.

Questions to Consider:

1. What traditions were established during this early period?
2. How did pyramid building evolve from earlier buildings?

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Lecture Eight

Sneferu, the Pyramid Builder (2613–2589 BC)

Scope: This lecture will present a portrait of the founder of the "Fabulous Fourth" Dynasty, Sneferu. We will see how a pharaoh became king—by marrying the right woman! Sneferu's reign saw three major innovations: (1) by trial and error, true pyramid construction began; (2) Egypt became an international power; and (3) artistic standards were established that would last for thousands of years.

Outline

I. Sneferu (2613–2589 BC) built several pyramids, a great architectural achievement. He was the first pharaoh we know of who carved his name in a cartouche.

A. Meidum is the first attempt at a true pyramid. It looks more like a tower than a pyramid.

1. A stepped pyramid was first built, the steps later filled in with limestone. But the limestone casing wasn't stable, and the pyramid seems to have been abandoned.
2. There was a temple next to the pyramid.
3. The pyramid's burial chamber, which had a vaulted ceiling, was the first to be built above ground.
4. A corbelled ceiling in the chamber prevented collapse by distributing the weight of the huge stones in the pyramid.
5. Two uninscribed stelae nearby, however, suggest that the pyramid was never used. Some graffiti for Sneferu can still be seen in the mortuary temple, the only hard evidence we have that it is his pyramid.

B. The Bent Pyramid of Dahshur was Sneferu's second pyramid.

1. Why the bend? It starts out like Meidum at 54 degrees. The corners of the pyramid were built on unstable ground, so structural changes were necessary.
2. The burial chamber was probably the greatest room in the world, with a spectacular vaulted ceiling that was 55 feet high.
3. But there were problems—cracks formed because the pyramid was not stable at the corners. Cedar beams were used to brace the collapsing walls. The pyramid was quickly finished with a "bend" in the angle.
4. This pyramid, nearly as large as the Great Pyramid at Giza, also had to be abandoned.
5. A Valley Temple and causeway completed the complex.

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C. The Red Pyramid of Dahshur, a third pyramid, is Sneferu's burial place. Fully complete, it is the first large true pyramid.

II. Sneferu's international policies took him beyond the borders of Egypt.

A. Cedars of Lebanon, obtained through trade, were needed for ships and temple doors.

1. Wood was a scarce commodity in Egypt; thus, stone buildings were common.

2. From river boats to sacred barques, ships were central to Egypt. But Egyptians were not good sailors, spoiled as they were by the prevailing winds when sailing up the Nile or the current when sailing down it. They called the Mediterranean "the great green." A trip to Lebanon for cedars was a big matter.

B. Sneferu sent expeditions to Sinai to mine turquoise, an exotic commodity for jewelry.

1. Inscriptions call Sneferu "Smiter of Barbarians" in the foreign territory. He had a large army to get what he wanted in the Sinai.

2. There were many difficulties in mining: the organization for such a trip was considerable in itself, not to mention the demands made by the terrible summer heat.

3. The Temple of Serabit el-Khadim was built like a mine on top of a mountain dedicated to Hathor, "Our Lady of Turquoise." Flinders Petrie excavated the temple and found a small sphinx, which he later buried for protection without ever marking where he put it.

III. The art of Sneferu's reign set standards for centuries to come.

A. His wife had beautiful inlaid turquoise jewelry.

B. The first great life-size portrait statues were sculpted during his reign.

1. Those of Rahotep (high priest of Memphis) and Nofret are masterpieces.

2. Hemiunu, a pyramid architect and son of Sneferu, is depicted as fat, a sign of prosperity.

IV. Papyrus Westcar, in Berlin, contains the first personal anecdote about a king.

A. The papyrus shows the first use of exotic fishnet clothing—young ladies in fishnet attire are described rowing Sneferu.

B. One rowing girl loses her turquoise fish amulet.

C. Sneferu calls a magician who parts the waters for him—centuries before Moses—and the king retrieves the amulet for the girl.

D. The story is fictional but an indication nonetheless that he was an approachable pharaoh.

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V. Sneferu established a family tradition, perhaps his greatest legacy of all.

A. He built the largest building in the history of the world to that time, the Bent Pyramid.

B. But Sneferu wasn't deterred by failure, showing his people by example how to build a true pyramid.

C. He showed Egypt how to be an international power and established artistic conventions.

D. Khufu (Cheops), his son, who would build the Great Pyramid of Giza, was perhaps his most important legacy of all.

Essential Reading:

I. E. S. Edwards, *The Pyramids of Egypt*, Chapters 2 and 3.

Questions to Consider:

1. What were the stages in the development of the true pyramid?
2. Other than pyramids, what were Sneferu's achievements?

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Lecture Nine
The Great Pyramid of Giza

Scope: Here we will learn the "nuts and bolts" of pyramid building. Step by step we will see how a pyramid was built, from leveling the foundation to laying the capstone. Higher mathematics was not needed to build a pyramid, only great care, an endless supply of stone, lots of cheap labor, and a remarkable social organization. We will also discuss the significance of the "Boat Beneath the Pyramid"—the 144-foot boat discovered in 1954 in a pit near the Great Pyramid.

Outline

I. Khufu (2589–2566 BC), or Cheops, as the Greeks called him, the son of Sneferu, built the Great Pyramid.

A. The Great Pyramid is 480 feet high, the highest building in the world until the Eiffel Tower was built. The base covers 13 1/2 acres and is built of 2 1/2 million blocks, averaging 2.5 tons each. It required masses of labor and advanced social organization to build--but not higher mathematics.

B. The building of the pyramid is burdened with myth and legend.

1. People talk about the magical power of the pyramidal shape. But its shape was more the result of evolving accidents than a sudden discovery. The pyramid was a tomb for the pharaoh; it wasn't a form that even the ancient Egyptians considered magical.

2. Napoleon was said to have gone into the burial chamber alone and come out again ashen-faced, refusing to describe what he saw. Was he genuinely disturbed by the experience—or was he just creating the legend of Napoleonic greatness?

3. Herodotus says 90,000 men at a time built the Great Pyramid in three-month stints, probably in the season when their fields were under water. When he says they used "machines" to build it, however, he's probably referring to levers.

4. Contrary to popular belief, slaves didn't build the pyramid—the Exodus of the Israelites was much later. There were never large numbers of slaves doing public works in Egypt.

II. No architectural papyri exist explaining how to build temples or pyramids; it was apparently a trade secret. So how was the pyramid built?

A. Workers cleared the sand down to bedrock. They probably built channels in the earth at the base and filled them with water until they had a level surface, much like the principle of a carpenter's level.

B. The rock quarries were next to the pyramid, so moving stone over long distances was unnecessary.

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C. The pyramid has two entrances; visitors today enter by the one that robbers created.

D. The pyramid's original plan changed from a below-ground burial to a higher chamber.

E. The Grand Gallery, a passageway to the burial chamber, is an engineering marvel: a 28-foot high, corbelled ceiling that goes all the way up the pyramid. Its function is unknown.

F. The sarcophagus of Khufu is the only thing in the burial chamber. But it happens to be 2 inches wider than the doorway! It must have been placed there before the pyramid was finished, and the chamber was built around it.

G. Relieving chambers were used instead of corbelling to remove the weight from the burial chamber ceiling.

H. How were the stones positioned at the top of the pyramid, by ramp or winding road?

1. We know they used ramps elsewhere. Or they may have had the equivalent of a switchback.
2. In the end, careful measurement, not higher mathematics, was "all" that was required for construction. Construction was completed within the 22 years of Khufu's reign.

III. Overall, highly sophisticated social organization was needed for quarrying the stone, transporting the blocks, and feeding the workers.

IV. Khufu buried a boat ("the Cheops boat") next to his pyramid.

A. In 1954 a boat pit was discovered carved in the bedrock and covered with blocks.

B. The boat, made of cedars of Lebanon, was broken down into pieces. It was later reconstructed and found to be 150 feet long.

C. Given that it had no mast fitting, it wasn't intended to sail.

D. The oars were too small—model tests reveal that it wasn't rowed.

E. It may have been a ritual boat to take the pharaoh to the next world. Or, it may have been used—only once—to convey the body of Cheops from the east to the west bank of the Nile.

F. I'm attempting to build a full-scale replica of the boat and put it on the Nile.

Essential Reading:

I. E. S. Edwards, *The Pyramids of Egypt*, Chapter 3.

Questions to Consider:

1. What was the interior of the Great Pyramid like?

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2. Which was more essential in building the Great Pyramid, technology or organizational skills?

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Lecture Ten
The End of the Old Kingdom

Scope: This is a period of change and eventual decline. After the fantastic achievements of Dynasty IV, something changed, and Egyptologists are not sure what it was. In addition to building pyramids, pharaohs of Dynasty V seem to have shifted their religious focus to sun worship. And we will see a new architectural development—the sun temples of Abu Gurob. The kings of the next dynasty (Dynasty VI) continue to build pyramids, but these will be small affairs, nothing like the great ones of Sneferu, Khufu, and Chephren. The last king of the dynasty, Pepi II, may have lived too long, been feeble at the end of his reign, and so plunged Egypt into chaos.

Outline

I. There are many curiosities and misconceptions concerning the famous Sphinx, only 20 feet smaller than the Great Pyramid, built in Dynasty IV.

A. Chephren (2558–2532), or Khafre, carved the Sphinx from a huge rock encountered while building a causeway. It is part *man* in shape (probably Chephren himself), and part lion.

B. It was built about 4,500 years ago—not in 10,000 BC, as some geologists have argued.

C. Napoleon's soldiers didn't shoot away the nose of the Sphinx. We have pre-Napoleonic drawings that show the nose was already missing.

D. Freudian psychology discusses the Sphinx as a woman—but it's a man wearing a headdress reserved only for royalty. The false beard is missing, parts of which ended up in the British and Egyptian museums. The British Museum, which doesn't display its fragment, probably doesn't want to return it to Egypt for fear of creating a precedent.

E. Chephren's Valley temple is the only large one from the period. It is paved with alabaster. But after Chephren, things would change.

F. His successor, Menkaure (Mycerinus), also built on the Giza Plateau, although his pyramid was smaller.

G. The last pharaoh of Dynasty IV, Shepseskaf, moved away from Giza. He returned to Saqqara and built a mastaba. The great pyramid-building era was over.

II. Dynasty V (2498–2345 BC) was the time of the solar kings.

A. Rejecting tradition, the pharaohs built sun temples at Abu Gurob, south of Saqqara, in addition to their pyramids at nearby Abu Sir. The ben-ben stone, atop a squat obelisk, is central at the temples with an altar in front.

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B. The kings changed their names. After Userkaf the pharaohs take *Re* names: Sahure, Neferirkare, Shepseskare, and so on. It may be that the priests are exerting a stronger influence.

C. Pyramid texts were begun under Unas (2375–2345 BC), the last king of Dynasty V. He returned to Saqqara and built a small pyramid inscribed with magical spells. The pyramid texts on the interior walls are intended to ensure that the pharaoh will get to the next world. The inscriptions are in columns—individually done, not stenciled.

1. The spells, in three stages, were, first of all, supposed to keep the body undisturbed before "going west."
2. The second stage was to make sure the voyage to the west was finished safely. Associated with the setting sun, the west was a symbol of death in Egyptian thinking.
3. The third and last stage was to ensure that the pharaoh was accepted into the next world. The spells operated on a magical principle: 'The word is the deed.'
4. One text, the "cannibal hymn," describes Unas eating the entrails of his enemy. But the meaning may not be literal. E. A. Wallace Budge, curator of the Egyptian collection at the British Museum in the early part of the twentieth century, argued that the story of Osiris was originally offered as a cautionary tale against cannibalism.

III. Dynasty VI (2345–2181 BC) was the last Old Kingdom dynasty.

A. The kings continued to build small pyramids, like hills, inscribed with texts.

B. Mastabas of the nobility rivaled pharaohs' pyramids. Apparently, the nobles' power was increasing at the pharaoh's expense.

C. There was a total collapse at the end of the Old Kingdom, then a recovery leading to the Middle Kingdom, and another collapse before the New Kingdom. As far as I know, Egypt is the only great civilization to endure *two* major collapses.

1. Pepi II (2278–2184 BC) was the last pharaoh of the Old Kingdom.
2. He ruled for 94 years, the longest reign in the history of the world.
3. Perhaps he ruled *too* long and became feeble. This is the inherent danger of a pharaoh-centric government. His gradual descent may have led to the collapse of Egyptian civilization.

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Essential Reading:

Aidan Dodson, *Monarchs of the Nile*, Chapter V.

Supplementary Reading:

Peter Clayton, *Chronicle of the Pharaohs*, pp. 60–68.

Questions to Consider:

1. What changes do we see in religious buildings during this period?
2. What are the possible causes of the decline of the Old Kingdom?

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Lecture Eleven
The First Intermediate Period (2181–2040 BC)

Scope: Here we will see trouble in paradise. After centuries of powerful growth, the rise of nationhood, pyramids, and prosperity, Egypt totally collapses. We will explore the possible causes of this collapse but, more important, we will examine the consequences for religion, art, and politics of this anarchy that descended on Egypt. We will also use the First Intermediate Period to show the methods Egyptologists use to reconstruct history when the historical sources are scant.

Outline

I. Physicist Kurt Mendelssohn's theory was that Egypt declined because unemployed laborers revolted against the pharaonic order—he was probably wrong. In reconstructing the First Intermediate Period, we use various sources. One of them is Manetho (third century BC), an Egyptian priest who wrote a history of Egypt (*Aegyptiaka*) in Greek for Ptolemy II.

A. The original text of Manetho is lost, but we have quotations from later ancient sources: "70 kings in 70 Days." In other words, there was no stability.

B. Another possibility is that there may have been simultaneous kings in the north and south. We do know the capital changed during this period—from Memphis to Herakleopolis.

II. Kings lists are a basic historical resource of ancient Egypt. Carved on temple walls or written on papyrus, they list the chain of pharaohs.

A. The Palermo Stone goes up to Dynasty V. Our oldest record, it gives the years of reigns and some details but ends before the First Intermediate Period.

B. The Karnak List, today in the Louvre, has 61 kings up to Tuthmosis III.

C. The Abydos List, with 76 kings up to Seti I, was used in rituals. Once a year, the pharaoh would read the names of kings in the Hall of the Ancients in order to provision them in the next world.

D. The Turin Papyrus originally listed 300 kings up to Ramses II, with some details of their reigns. The papyrus is badly damaged.

III. The literature of the Middle Kingdom, which looks back to the intermediate period, also yields information. Of special importance are lamentations, a type of literature used as a source of history.

A. One lamentation concerns a man about to commit suicide. His *ba* (personality) threatens to desert him if he does, which means the man wouldn't be able to resurrect.

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B. The lamentations reveal that Egypt was invaded by foreigners. A major theme of the lamentations is that divine order is upset, contrary to the tradition Egypt so long revered. Who was responsible for maintaining divine order? The pharaoh.

C. This *maat* (divine order) resembled the Elizabethan Great Chain of Being—the world was structured according to God's plan.

D. The lamentations are nostalgic about the good old days of Sneferu. The social order was being trampled—this was the period when the great pyramids were robbed.

E. The lamentations reflect the Egyptians' fear of the desert and the Bedouins who populate it. For Egyptians, their well-watered land was the best place on earth.

F. Finally, the lamentations even question the taxing of people in difficult times. Egypt was the largest bureaucracy in the history of the world, and its government was supported by taxing the peasants according to how high the Nile rose.

IV. We know little about the First Intermediate Period.

A. Dynasties VII and VIII (2181–2160 BC) ruled from Memphis.

B. Excavations at Memphis are difficult because of the high water table and extensive cultivation, and thus it's a "lost city." Because the capital is gone, the First Intermediate Period is hard to study. But Egypt, as we shall see, will rise again.

Essential Reading:

Aidan Dodson, *Monarchs of the Nile*, Chapter V.

Supplementary Reading:

Peter Clayton, *Chronicle of the Pharaohs*, pp. 60–68.

Questions to Consider:

1. What are our sources of information for this obscure period?
2. What was life like for the nobility during this period?

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Lecture Twelve
The Middle Kingdom: Dynasty XI (2134–1991 BC)

Scope: At the end of the Old Kingdom, the unthinkable happened: Egypt collapsed and was thrown into anarchy. The Middle Kingdom is the story of the resurrection of Egypt.

It is made up of only two dynasties: XI and XII. First we will look at Dynasty XI, the dynasty of unification. We will see Egypt slowly come under a single strong ruler once again and rise to greatness. We will also see that the names of the kings often provide clues to the political state of the country.

Outline

I. Dynasty XI (2134–1991 BC) began with kings all named Intef, so the chronology is a bit confusing. They were more Theban princes than true kings.

A. The Intefs, residing in the south, tried for unification. Intef Seher-towi (2134–2117 BC) begins the dynasty. His name means "makes peace in the two lands," and he wrote his name in a cartouche. He had aspirations, but isn't really king of the two lands.

B. Intef Wahankh (2117–2069 BC), "established in life," was a dog lover, the first in history. An Egyptologist found a stela in 1860 showing his five dogs. (Egyptians were lovers of both cats and dogs.) This pharaoh called himself "King of Upper and Lower Egypt."

C. Intef Nakht-neb-tep-nefer (2069–2060 BC), "beautiful and strong champion," fought with northern rulers, trying to unify Egypt.

II. The Intefs are followed by the Montuhoteps ("the war god is pleased").

A. Montuhotep I (also called Montuhotep II), Se-Ankh-ib-towi (2060–2010 BC), "He Gives Life to the Heart of the Two Lands," is the new political hope. Later, he added to his Horus name Sam-towi, "Uniter of the Two Lands," a sign of his accomplishment in unifying the two lands. He took the name Neb-Hepet-Re ("Pleased is the Lord Re") as his prenomen.

B. A warrior king who really was the unifier, Montuhotep left records of his battles up and down the Nile.

1. He built a spectacular mortuary temple in Thebes that has been excavated several times.

2. In the late nineteenth century, Swiss Egyptologist Edouard Naville found three princesses buried there, poorly mummified.

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3. In the 1920s, American archaeologist Herbert Winlock found two more princesses, one only five years old but a "lady of the harem"—a daughter of the court, a 'palace kid.'
4. In Middle Kingdom burials, people are placed on their sides so they can look out of the coffin through two eyes painted on it. Often the insides of the coffins are inscribed with spells to help the deceased get to the next world.
5. In the 1920s, Winlock found a mass burial at Thebes of over sixty mummies in Deir el Bahri, or "place of the northern monastery" in Arabic. The mummies all turned out to be young men—a group of soldiers brought back for burial.
6. Winlock made further discoveries in a previously excavated tomb. The tomb of Meket re, chancellor and steward of the palace of Montuhotep I, contained remarkable wooden tomb models, like dioramas, depicting such amenities as bakeries and breweries that he expected to find in the next world.
7. In another tomb, Winlock also found the silver scarab, or beetle, worn by Wah, a man who worked for Meket re. The eyes of the scarab were hacked out so it wouldn't be able to bite the deceased.
8. Winlock also found the family letters of a Ka priest, Heka Nakht, that revealed him to be a querulous micro-manager of the family estate. Agatha Christie based her novel *Death Comes as the End* on these letters.

C. Montuhotep Se-Ankh-Ka-Re (2010–1998 BC), "Causing the soul (ka) of Re to live," succeeded his father. He sent 3,000 men to the caravan route of the Wadi Hammamat in year 8 and was reported to have dug twelve wells along the way.

D. Montuhotep Neb-towi-Re (1997–1991 BC) followed, though few records exist of his reign. He sent 10,000 men under his Vizier Amenemhet to the Wadi Hammamat for stone. A pregnant gazelle led them to the stone to be used and gave birth on it. They sacrificed the gazelle.

E. This was a dynasty that could build big and mount large expeditions—this was Egypt reborn.

Essential Reading:

H. E. Winlock, *The Rise and Fall of the Middle Kingdom in Thebes*.

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Supplementary Reading:

Aidan Dodson, *Monarchs of the Nile*, Chapter VI.

Questions to Consider:

1. How did Egypt eventually become a nation again?
2. What were the accomplishments of the pharaohs who unified Egypt?

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Classical Egyptian Alphabet

Hieroglyph	Description	Sound
	vulture	a
	foot	b
	placenta	ch
	hand	d
	arm	e
	horned viper	f
	jar stand	g
	twisted flax	h
	reed leaf	i
	snake	j(dj)
	basket	k

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Classical Egyptian Alphabet

Hieroglyph	Description	Sound
	owl	m
	water	n
	mat	p
	hill	q
	mouth	r
	folded cloth	s
	pool of water	sh
	loaf of bread	t
	tethering ring	tch
	quail chick	u / w
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Timeline

500,000–3200 BC ..... Prehistoric Period

3100 BC ..... Narmer and Unification of Egypt

3050–2686 BC ..... First Two Dynasties

2686–2647 BC ..... Zoser Builds Step Pyramid

2613–2589 BC ..... Sneferu Builds First True Pyramid

2589–2566 BC ..... The Great Pyramid Constructed

2181–2049 BC ..... First Intermediate Period

2134–1782 BC ..... The Middle Kingdom

1782–1650 BC ..... Second Intermediate Period

c. 1570 BC ..... Hyksos Expelled

1498–1483 BC ..... Hatshepsut Rules Egypt

1386–1349 BC ..... Amenhotep III; New Kingdom at Peak

1350–1334 BC ..... Akhenaten and Amarna Revolution

1334–1325 BC ..... Tutankhamen's Reign

1279–1212 BC ..... Ramses the Great

1080–945 BC ..... Dynasty XXI—Priest Kings

945–715 BC ..... Libyans Rule Egypt

747–664 BC ..... Nubians Rule Egypt

664–525 BC ..... Assyrians Rule Egypt

525–359 BC ..... Persians Rule Egypt

360–343 BC ..... Nectanebo II, Last Egyptian Ruler

343–332 BC ..... Second Persian Period

332 BC ..... Alexander the Great Conquers Egypt

323–30 BC ..... Greeks Rule Egypt

30 BC ..... Death of Cleopatra

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Glossary

Archaising: An artistic or literary style that imitates techniques of the Old Kingdom.

Ba: Part of the soul, usually represented as having the head of a man and the body of a bird.

Ben-ben stone: The earliest form of the obelisk, worshipped in temples.

Book of the Dead: A collection of magical spells and prayers intended to help the deceased resurrect in the next world.

Canopic jars: Four jars used to hold the internal organs removed at the time of mummification.

Cartouche: An oval encircling the name of a king or queen.

Cenotaph: A symbolic tomb in addition to the deceased's real place of burial.

Coptic: Christian art and religion as practiced in Egypt.

Corbel: An inward stepping of the walls of a room toward the ceiling.

Coregency: Two pharaohs ruling at the same time by agreement, usually father and son.

Demotic: A later form of writing the Egyptian language used after the seventh century BC. The word is from the Greek meaning *people*, because it was the secular form of writing, as opposed to hieroglyphs.

Determinative hieroglyph: A hieroglyph placed at the end of a word to clarify its meaning.

Faience: A ceramic material used for making amulets and tiles.

Festival of Opet: A religious festival during which the statues of the gods Amun, Mut, and Khonsu were taken from Karnak Temple to Luxor Temple.

Heb-sed festival: A ritual intended to be celebrated every thirty years by the pharaoh to ensure his rejuvenation.

Hieratic: The cursive form of writing the Egyptian language derived from hieroglyphs.

Hypostyle hall: A room of a temple with columns supporting a roof.

Ka: Part of the deceased's soul that is thought of as a double.

Kings list: An official list of the kings of Egypt, usually carved on a temple wall.

Kiosk: A small, open structure made of stone, usually attached to a temple in honor of a god.

Maat: Divine order; also, the Goddess of Truth.

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Mastaba: A bench-shaped structure above a tomb, especially during the Old Kingdom.

Mummy: Any preserved cadaver.

Natron: A naturally occurring mixture of sodium carbonate, sodium bicarbonate, and sodium chloride—used to dehydrate the body in mummification.

Necrotome: A knife believed to have been used by embalmers ("death knife").

Obelisk: A tall shaft of a single stone, usually pink granite. Obelisks were placed in pairs at the entrances to temples.

Oracle: A person divinely inspired who foresees the future.

Papyrus: Writing material made from the stalks of the papyrus plant.

Pharaoh: The divine ruler of Egypt, associated with Horus, the falcon god.

Pylon: A monumental gateway or entrance to a temple or palace.

Registration: In art works, the practice of having different figures on different levels or registers.

Relieving chambers: Small rooms designed to distribute the weight stresses of the pyramid above; also called "stress-relieving chambers."

Resurrection: The belief that the body will get up and live again in the next world.

Sarcophagus: A stone receptacle for preserving a mummy.

Scarab: The sacred beetle. Often amulets were carved in this shape to ensure continued existence.

Serekh: A schematic representation of a palace facade with a rectangle above it in which the king's Horus name was written.

Sesperonch: A Coptic word for "magician" derived from the ancient Egyptian words "scribe of the house of life."

Stela: A round-topped standing stone carved with an inscription.

Stretching the Cord: A ceremony performed at the beginning of the construction of a temple.

Ushabti: Small statues of servants intended to serve the deceased in the next world.

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American Research Center in Egypt (ARCE), Emory University, West Campus, 1256 Briarcliff Road, NE, Building A, Suite 423W, Atlanta, Georgia, 30306. Organization of professional Egyptologists and laymen interested in all aspects of Egypt, including Coptic and Islamic. An annual conference is held and a journal (*JARCE*) is published. The following chapters sponsor lectures by Egyptologists and publish newsletters.

North Texas Chapter: P.O. Box 38642, Dallas, TX 57238

Southern California Chapter: 3460 South Broadway, Los Angeles, CA 90007.

Northern California Chapter: P.O. Box 11352, Berkeley, CA, 94712.

Washington, D.C. Chapter: 3737 Fessenden Street NW, Washington, D.C., 20016.

Ancient Egypt Studies Association (AESA), 7110 S.E. 29th Avenue, Portland, Oregon, 97202. A group of interested laypersons and professionals with regular meetings, lectures, and a newsletter.

Egypt Exploration Society (EES), 3 Doughty Mews, London WC1N 2PG, London, England. Publishes the *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, as well as a glossy magazine, *Egyptian Archaeology*, and sponsors several lectures in London each year.

Egyptian Study Society (ESS), Denver Museum of Natural History, 2001 Colorado Boulevard, Denver, CO, 80205. Another group of interested laypersons and professionals with meetings, lectures, and a newsletter.

Egyptological Seminar of New York (ESNY), c/o Dag Bergman, 45 Clara St., Brooklyn, NY 11218. Sponsors lectures in New York by visiting Egyptologists

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and publishes a journal, *Bulletin of the Egyptological Seminar of New York (BES)*, and a newsletter.

KMT: A Modern Journal of Ancient Egypt, Dept. G, P.O. Box 1475, Sebastopol, CA 95473. The journal publishes articles on culture, history, personalities, arts, and monuments of ancient Egypt.

Oriental Institute, University of Chicago, 1155 East 58 St., Chicago, IL 60637. Sponsors lectures in Chicago and programs for children and has a correspondence course in hieroglyphs. A newsletter is published, as well as an annual report of the Institute's activities.

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